

VZCZCXRO2437
RR RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHSF #1155/01 2671431
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 241431Z SEP 07
FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4332
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SOFIA 001155

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/21/2017

TAGS: [BU](#) [EUN](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: BULGARIA NAMES DEPUTY INTERIOR MINISTER ENVOY TO EU

SOFIA 00001155 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Ambassador John Beyrle, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: President Parvanov has appointed Deputy Minister of Interior Boyko Kotzev as Bulgaria's new permanent representative to the EU, a position viewed as one of the country's most important diplomatic post abroad. Kotzev, 51, is a career diplomat with twenty years of experience who has held a number of EU-related posts, including Deputy Head of Bulgaria's Mission to the EU. He was appointed Deputy Minister of Interior in charge of EU integration and international cooperation in 2001, and retained his post after the current Socialist-led government took over in 2005. He was named Ambassador to the EU because of his good ties with the ruling Socialists and solid experience in EU matters and rule of law, still closely monitored by Brussels. Our experience with Kotzev has not always been positive. He is generous with promises but not with follow through, and certainly not with results. Kotzev's appointment triggered some criticism by the opposition and media, related mostly to the figure of his father, the longest-serving chief of Bulgaria's communist foreign intelligence service. END SUMMARY

¶2. (SBU) Kotzev, who was appointed Ambassador to the EU with a presidential decree August 14, is expected to depart for Brussels in the first half of October. He will be Bulgaria's first permanent representative to the EU. Officials here say Kotzev was chosen for the key post because of his extensive experience in EU-related matters as well as rule of law, a problematic area for Bulgaria, which is still closely monitored by the EU. A diplomat by training, Kotzev has specialized in law in The Hague, London and Geneva, and has served as Deputy Director of the MFA's European Integration directorate and Deputy Head of Bulgaria's Mission to the EU. In his capacity of Deputy Minister of Interior, Kotzev was responsible for negotiations on the "Judiciary and Internal Affairs" chapter of Bulgaria's EU accession treaty. Kotzev is politically acceptable for both President Georgi Parvanov and Foreign Minister Ivailo Kalfin, the key decision-makers on diplomatic appointments, and also has good ties with the Socialists who dominate the incumbent center-left government. In mid-2005, the Socialists nominated Kotzev for Justice Minister in the first government line-up proposed by incumbent PM Stanishev, which failed to win approval in parliament. He subsequently retained his position as Deputy Interior Minister in the three-party government.

¶3. (U) Born on June 8, 1956, in Sofia, Kotzev earned a degree in International Law from the Moscow State University of International Relations in 1980. He specialized in Public International Law at the UN International Court of Justice in The Hague in 1983, in Public International Law at the International Law Commission in Geneva in 1984, and in European Legal Integration at the Civil Service College in London in 1995. Kotzev has 20-years work experience at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He served as Deputy Director of the European Integration Directorate and as Deputy Head of the Mission of the Embassy of Bulgaria in Zimbabwe 1989-1993. He occupied the post of Deputy Head of MFA's International Law Department, 1993-1995. He was Deputy Head of the Mission of the Embassy of Bulgaria to the EU 1995-1998. In August 2001, he was appointed Deputy Minister of Interior in charge international relations and EU integration.

Kotzev speaks English, French, and Russian. He is married, and has two children.

¶4. (C) His impressive professional CV notwithstanding, Kotzev's appointment as Ambassador to Brussels triggered criticism in Bulgaria. The reputable business weekly Capital critically noted that EU officials who worked with Kotzev had mixed feelings about his performance. The EU negotiating team in Brussels had a parallel assessment, which was symmetrical to the lackluster performance by the Ministry of Interior on Justice and Home Affairs, widely criticized in the EU Commission's last two monitoring reports on Bulgaria in September 2006 and in June 2007. EC experts who wrote the reports complained about poor cooperation on the part of the MOI officials who had denied them access to information. At that time Deputy Minister Kotzev was responsible for EU integration issues. According to a high-level EC official quoted by Capital, Kotzev was capable of "Byzantine tricks" and his habit of avoiding clear answers is expected to win him many enemies in Brussels.

¶5. (C) Domestic criticism to Kotzev's appointment was related mostly to the figure of his late father, the longest serving director of the communist-era foreign intelligence service. There have been allegations that Vassil Kotzev was involved in one of the most notorious operations of the communist State Security, the infamous "umbrella murder" of dissident writer Georgi Markov, killed with a poison-tipped umbrella in 1978 in London. The opposition center-right party of ex-PM Ivan Kostov argued that Boyko Kotzev was hardly the best choice of Bulgaria's face to the EU. Kotzev's brother, Emil Kotzev, serves as director of Technoexportstroi, a major construction company that has been involved in a number of large infrastructure projects in recent years. The company is the Bulgarian concession holder of the Trakia highway project, which has been marred by alleged corruption. Despite allegations of undue influence there has been no evidence that Emil Kotzev has profited from his brother's position in the government. According to opposition MP Atanas Atanasov, the former chief of Bulgaria's counter-intelligence service, Boyko Kotzev has served as an informal

SOFIA 00001155 002.2 OF 002

legal advisor to the late Stoil Slavov. Slavov, who was killed in a bomb explosion in 2004, was co-founder of one of the major organized crime groups in Bulgaria, SIC. Independent sources have not confirmed this allegation, nor has it come out in the media.

¶6. (C) COMMENT: An experienced diplomat, Kotzev is also A perfect bureaucratic careerist. He appears pleasant and eager to Please, but has delivered more promises and excuses than actual results. A notable example is when, several years ago, representatives of U.S. law enforcement agencies and the Embassy joined efforts to propose a law enforcement cooperation agreement to the MOI. Kotzev, the MOI lead on the project, made promises but the document was never signed. In this and other situations, Kotzev would not acknowledge whether he had the authority or power to deliver what he had promised. Kotsev has been a loyal stalwart for Interior Minister Petkov, a Socialist party baron, now battling the Prime Minister over internal ministry and intelligence reforms. Kotsev's appointment to Brussels owes more to internal party mechanics and politics than to sheer qualifications. He is more tactician than strategist and unlikely to burnish Bulgaria's standing in the EU. In short, Bulgaria missed a chance to impress. Our advice for those who work with him is "trust but verify."

BEYRLE